

2013 NBA Draft: Phoenix Suns prospects and what the WARP is all about

Written by
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In an age of advanced statistics there are too many ways to mention here of how to evaluate the prospects in a draft class. One way to properly evaluate the talent is to view the prospects to come up with an eye test and then confirm thoughts with trends seen in the advanced statistics.

Moving into this new age of evaluating stats the [Phoenix Suns](#) have begun to embrace them with the likes of General Manager Ryan McDonough and his staff.

The generic definition of WARP is Wins Above Replacement Player that shows the value of an individual versus what an average NBA free-agent would provide. For example, Nerlens Noel has a 3.6 WARP rating meaning that he is worth 3.6 additional wins for the team that drafts him in comparison to what a free-agent would provide. In this years draft class Noel has the highest WARP of the class and nearly a full win more than the next best player on most Big Boards.

This stat is courtesy of Kevin Pelton, ESPN.com Analyst. His article on the [projected WARP for this years class](#) is an interesting take on the value of the prospects, which also shows trends here for the [past seven drafts](#). Both "Insider" links.

Looking at what this means from a Suns perspective:

	No.5	No.30	No.57	Total	
ESPN		Alex Len		Erick Green	Richard Howell
WARP		0.3		0.4	0.1
DX		Victor Oladipo		Pierre Jackson	Ryan Kelly
WARP		1.1		2.1	1.1

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NDI	Ben McLemore	Archie Goodwin	Jack Cooley
WARP	1.1	-0.3	NA
DRAFT.NET	Nerlens Noel	Jamaal Franklin	Ray McCallum
WARP	3.6	0.7	1.1

(ESPN is run by Chad Ford, Draft Express by Jonathon Givony, [NBA Draft Insider](#) by Kris Habbas, and NBA Draft.net by Aron Smith)

The most telling thing here is that of all the "Draft Experts" there is no consensus at all. Four different players at No. 5, four different players at No. 30, and four different players at No. 57. There is nothing far-fetched about having different opinions in the later picks, but at No. 5 it is concerning.

In here Draft.net has Noel and Franklin falling thus boosting their WARP total. The Suns won 25 games last year due to a lack of talent, adding these players raises the expectations to 25.8, 25.8, 29.3, and 31.4 for next season.

WARP leans towards active players and in most cases the best player on a team having a high WARP because they are the most valuable player. Ball-handlers, play-makers, scorers, and other ilks like that have high WARPs.

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WARP, like Win Shares, PER, and other advanced stats help to take the eye test to another level and affirm trends. Like in this analysis Noel, Otto Porter Jr., Cody Zeller, C.J. McCollum, Trey Burke, Anthony Bennett, and Michael Carter-Williams are all Top 10 in WARP, but also Top 10 on most Big Boards. Others that are on the fringe of the Top 10 like Kentavious Caldwell-Pope (No. 3 in WARP) and Serge Karasev (10) show that they belong in the conversation.

That is what advanced stats does, they reaffirm what our eyes and minds are telling us while watching basketball.